

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
CONTINGENCY PLAN Q & A DOCUMENT
APRIL 8, 2011

We continue to hope that Congress will reach an agreement to avoid a government shutdown, but we are working to prepare for all possible scenarios. The following document provides information regarding the Fish and Wildlife Service's contingency plans in the event of a government shutdown.

Would National Wildlife Refuges be open to public access?

No. Refuge lands, visitor centers and other facilities would be closed to public access.

Are refuge hunting and fishing opportunities available if the government is closed?

No. All activities would be canceled until the government reopens.

Are refuges open for walking, biking and other access on trails and roads?

No. All refuges, hatcheries and other lands managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service would not be open to the public during the government shutdown.

Will wildlife inspectors be working?

Yes. Our wildlife inspectors are paid by user fees and would be on the job.

Will Fish and Wildlife Service firefighters respond to wild fires?

Yes. Service firefighters would be on call to respond to emergencies that affect public health and safety such as wild fires.

Will Service employees be available to respond to emergency situations on refuge or hatchery lands?

Yes. Refuge and hatchery managers have the discretion to call upon employees in case of public health, safety and emergency issues that may affect Service resources or facilities.

Can Friends groups still operate concessions, book stores or other activities?

No. Friends groups that have book stores, concessions or conduct volunteer activities on

Service lands and facilities would not have access to conduct business until the government reopens.

Will refuge officers be enforcing laws?

Yes. Refuge law enforcement personnel are 'excepted' from the government shutdown in order to ensure the protection of public safety, resources and facilities.

What happens to court ordered deadlines for endangered species actions that are due during a shutdown?

The Service would not have employees working to meet these deadlines and would work with the Department of Justice to address missed deadlines once the government reopens.

Would commercial activities conducted by contractors or other private citizens continue on refuge or hatchery lands if these contracts have already been obligated?

No. All facilities and lands would be closed. Contract work that is not essential and requires oversight would cease for the period of shut down and contracts amended to resume work once the government reopens.

Can Service personnel or equipment be deployed in emergency response outside of the Service's mission responsibilities (i.e. helping communities during expected Dakota spring flooding).

No. Unfortunately, Service personnel who normally would respond to local disaster situations would not be available during a government shutdown.

Would the Service be conducting any Section 7 consultations, NEPA analysis or other permit work?

No. Service employees would not be conducting any consultations, NEPA or other work of this nature until the government reopens.

Will Service employees be available to care for fish at National Fish Hatcheries and other wildlife at captive breeding facilities?

Yes. Both hatcheries and captive breeding facilities would have employees available to care for fish and other animals.

Why are some activities permitted to continue under the shutdown and some not?

Activities that are funded from non-appropriated sources will generally continue. Activities that are funded by yearly appropriations from Congress will have to cease as obligating funds in the absence of an appropriation is a violation of the Antideficiency Act.